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A traffic accident motivated a group of eighth-grade civics students to form different committees to obtain a traffic guard for their school. Committees were formed to contact the police department by letter and interview, to take pictures of the street corner and make charts showing its danger, to do research on constitutional rights of citizens, and to conduct house-to-house interviews with reference to accidents encountered in the neighborhood. The students established the fact that this was a group effort to prevent accidents. Students were instructed in interviewing, letter writing, and methods of research and data collecting.

Students learned to speak before groups and improved their manner of writing letters. Groups learned to organize themselves and to work with others.

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A CORE PROBLEM ON SAFETY

by Sadie Long
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At one of the schools in which I previously taught, a group of 8A students was crossing a busy thoroughfare, when suddenly one was hit in front of the school. There was deep concern over this incident. The civics lesson pertained to the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, hence the right of protection was discussed. Through investigation it was discovered that this was the only school without a School Guard. The problem was how to get a School Guard for our school. This immediately became the Core problem, a problem growing out of the pupils' experience, which gave each child the desire to participate.

Committees were formed as follows: a committee to contact the police department by letter and follow-up by interview if one was granted; a technical committee to take pictures of the street corner, clock the speed of cars on reaching it, and make charts showing its dangers; a committee to do research on Constitutional rights of citizens; a committee to do house-to-house interviews in that community with reference to accidents encountered in that neighborhood.

Before delving into the problem, we took a few days to use dramatization as a means of teaching interviewing. Some students acted as Chief of Police and others acted as the committee doing the interview, with the class criticizing or commenting where necessary. A review of letter writing was also needed, as well as methods of research and collecting data.

The committees grouped themselves in circles, elected their chairmen and recorders, set up their particular goals, and selected their manner of getting needed information. Assignments were made. I moved from group to group to give guidance and keep them in the framework of group techniques.

The technical committee interviewed me to borrow my movie camera and interviewed the audio-visual chairman to borrow the school polaroid camera. The class

contributed toward the purchase of film. At eight o'clock every morning for a week they stationed themselves at the corner mentioned earlier and took moving pictures of traffic and students as they crossed in front of the school. They did the same at 2:30 P.M. Another part of the committee made charts, pointing out danger spots. The chapter in the text on "Insuring Safety for Ourselves and Others" was read, with specific emphasis on accidents at school. They established the fact that this was a group effort to prevent accidents. Another part of the class drew cartoons of the "Bicycle Bug," "The Jughead Jaywalker," and the "Rushing Car." The speed of cars was clocked daily at the above-mentioned hours.

With the information gathered, the committee recorded its findings and co-ordinated it with other committees for presentation to the police department during the interview.

The committee presented its findings to the class first. These facts were taped. Many types of posters were made, a diorama was presented by one group, a movie with explanations was presented by another, and a round-table discussion by the research committee.

These findings were carried to the Safety Department of the Police Department. They listened attentively to the students, looked at the charts and movie, but they had to refuse the request, with regret, because there were no applicants on file and no one available.

On learning this, you can imagine the disappointment of the youngsters.

The chapter on "Our City Government" was recalled. The idea that "all power comes from the people" was fully discussed. It was decided that they would see what the mayor could do about the situation. A letter was sent to him requesting an interview. This was granted. The class worked out its approach, questions, spokesmen, and introduction. We interviewed the mayor. He listened attentively, looked at the photographs, and charts, and talked the problem over with the class at length. He immediately called the Division of Safety ordering a policeman placed on duty until a School Guard could be secured. This was done.

The class felt very good over this accomplishment. This was published in the school paper, daily paper, and Current Events Weekly Magazine, as a Core problem solved by an 8A Civics class.

During our period of evaluation many felt that now they were not afraid to speak before groups or to someone who is head of our city government such as our mayor. Their manner of writing letters has improved. They do not waste time in the library anymore groping for materials, they can now use the card catalogue. They have some knowledge of research materials available for usage. They know how to organize their groups and work with others. Round table, group discussions, and sharing experiences was shown through listening to taped recordings. They could hear their voices and make necessary corrections or comments.

Each child wrote out his idea of growth in an evaluative composition from which the above mentioned ideas of growth were ascertained.

Work on this problem took a period of four full weeks to be solved.